

Big Sky Libraries

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Gates Foundation Offers Training Grant to MSL

As the second phase of the U.S. libraries program, the Gates Foundation has offered MSL a grant to extend the original program's benefits to Montana's public libraries.

The grant application, due on July 5, may result in a grant of up to \$53,000 for a project that will help public library staff assist Montana citizens to use public access computing. Karen Strege said, "We are very happy to have this opportunity to provide more training to public library staff in the state. All libraries in Montana have minimal training budgets, as does MSL, so the influx of funds will allow us to meet our training goals faster. We appreciate the Gates Foundation's willingness to build upon the benefits of last year's project, which placed state-of-the-art computers in most of the state's public libraries."

MSL staff is busy collecting information to develop a training project that will meet the needs of Montana public library staff. The Foundation's decision on the grant will be announced in mid-August.

Calendar

For more information on these and other Montana Library events, visit our web calendar: <http://msl.state.mt.us/calendar.html>

June 12 — MSL Commission Meeting - MSL Conference Room - Helena

June 10-15 — Summer Institute 2001 - Small Public Library Management, Campus of Montana Tech - Butte

August 9 — MSL Commission Meeting - Lincoln County Library - Libby

MSL Evaluation Status Report

Bill Wilson and Ethel Himmel, library consultants from Wisconsin, conducted eight focus groups around the state to determine MSL's success at meeting goals set forth in the long-range plan. Focus groups, composed of librarians and trustees, took place in Wolf Point, Miles City, Billings, Great Falls, Butte, and Missoula. Focus groups composed of users of the Talking Book Library services were held in Helena and Billings. Ethel and Bill also toured the State Library, and interviewed staff and other users of MSL services.

The next step in this process is for Ethel and Bill to analyze the data they collected during their two weeks in the state and identify any gaps in the data. After filling any identified gaps, Bill and Ethel will write a draft report for review by MSL staff. The Commission will review the final report at their August 9 meeting.

Please call Karen Strege at 406-444-3115 if you have any questions.

A Word From Our State Librarian—[This article is being substituted for Karen's usual column.]

Trustee Corner: Are library trustees obsolete?

By Gardner Hanks, Idaho State Library Continuing Education Consultant

The public library trustee was an invention of the 19th Century, just like the public library. Many of the first trustees were members of the local women's clubs that founded as many as 75 percent of today's public libraries. Public libraries were part of the great progressive movement that included public education, an end to child labor, temperance, and women's suffrage, along with many other important local causes. Women library board members saw their role as part of the great effort to move civilization forward.

The first library trustees were risk takers. The Federated Women's Club wrote a model library law that is still the basic library law in many states. (Idaho's city library law still contains much of the language of this model law.) Although women could not vote in most states, they worked long and hard to get the law passed. The law very carefully separated the library board from the political influences of city councils, thus assuring political neutrality and setting the basic principles of intellectual freedom as the cornerstone of library ethics.

As public libraries became more prominent institutions, often through Carnegie building grants or through grants from local philanthropists to erect library buildings, more men became library trustees. The public library began to be seen as a necessary component for any substantial community, just like the school and the church. A substantial library building symbolized the community's prosperity and progressive nature. Public libraries were important institutions, and the position of library board member was an important one in the community. In creating the first library buildings in many communities, library boards worked long and hard not only on the building design and construction, but to assure that local tax funds would be available to operate a well-run and modern public library service.

Early public library trustees were truly pioneers, taking political and personal risks so that we could have local public libraries today. As the Idaho State Library enters its second century of service, it is perhaps a good time to ask whether today's library trustees have followed in the footsteps of these worthy ancestors. Do our public library trustees take their responsibilities seriously? Do they educate themselves about library issues so they can help their communities understand the continuing importance of public libraries in the information age? Are they willing to make stands for libraries in the face of powerful opposition? Or do they just take their role as

largely ceremonial, a chore to take on unwillingly and to pursue in as dilatory a manner as possible.

I wish I could say the answer was clear and that today's trustees take their jobs as responsibly as their illustrious forbearers did. Unfortunately, State Library consultants too often hear stories of library boards who have difficulty making a quorum at their meetings or of boards that demand their meetings last no longer than one hour. The record of trustee attendance at the Idaho Library Association annual conference has been abysmal. Although there are close to 600 public library trustees in Idaho, the best attendance at Idaho State Library workshops for trustees in the last 12 years was less than 100, not even one per library.

So are public library trustees obsolete? Should we turn the governance of our public libraries over to the local politicians that early trustees demanded distance from? I think that the answer should be a resounding, "No!"

Where trustees have been active in supporting their libraries, amazing things have happened. In the early 1990s, the trustees of the Kootenai-Shoshone Area Libraries not only supported a bond issue in the heart of anti-tax country, they went out and made presentations to community organizations and other groups. The result was an overwhelmingly successful election. A few years ago, the Boise board gently educated a city council about the dangers of putting public library branches in public schools. The result was a new plan to build full-service, stand-alone branches. In Priest River, the library board was instrumental in creating a brand new library district. They continued the struggle even after one election had failed. And currently in Burley and Rupert, the library trustees are leading the campaign to create a two-county district.

State Library consultants have found that they can pretty well predict the success or failure of a major library election based on the attitude of the library board. The more active the board, the greater the likelihood of a successful election. So library trustees are not obsolete. The library community still needs them, but we need trustees that are like those pioneers that helped found our great national public library system. We need trustees who are willing to put in the time necessary to support excellent library services. We need trustees who are willing to go to the educational programs that will give them the knowledge and skills to explain ever-changing library services to their communities. We need trustees who are willing to stand up for their libraries in spite of possible criticism.

It is the State Library's hope that every public library trustee in the state would become this kind of vital, pioneering trustee.

Commissioner's Corner

By Dorothy Laird, Vice Chair

Members of the MSL Commission are committed to excellence in Montana's libraries. One way to determine whether our libraries are providing citizens with appropriate library services is to require libraries to meet specific minimum standards. Public Library Standards, which were developed over several years and approved by the Commission, will be effective July 1, 2001. To be eligible for state aid in fiscal year 2002, libraries must meet eight minimum standards.

One of the standards requires a library to have a telephone and to answer telephone inquiries. When this standard was adopted, several public libraries in Montana did not have telephones. With the increased use of technology, all Montana libraries have been given the opportunity to have telephones.

Another standard requires paid staff to be present during 90% of all open hours. Although we value the services of our many volunteers, we recognize the special expertise provided by paid staff members.

One of the most important standards sets a minimum hours for a library to be open to the public. A library filled with outstanding materials and state-of-the-art technology is not useful to its patrons if the doors are locked.

We are proud of the Public Library Standards because we know that they will help to improve Montana's libraries.



Allan Cox, Joy Lewis, and Whitney Weber

2001 Fall Workshop

MSL will host the third annual Fall Workshop on September 21st-22nd in Billings on the MSU-Billings campus. The workshop will be open to all librarians and library trustees with no registration fee and lunch provided on both days of the workshop. The workshop will be funded by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds, which are administered by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the MSL Commission.

Heritage Welcomes New Employees

In the last six months new faces and talent have come to the Natural Heritage Program of MSL. John Carlson filled the lead Zoologist position in February. John hails from



Chuck Tilly, John Carlson

Fort Peck, is a bird expert and brings a lifelong knowledge of Montana's critters and landscapes. Allan Cox, former NRIS Director, returned in May as the Heritage Systems and Services Manager. We're delighted to again have Allan's considerable skills and experience at NRIS.

Last November, Chuck Tilly, who has a microbiology background, came on board as Web Developer and Database Specialist. Whitney Weber joined us in April as our new GIS/Database Coordinator. Whitney came from Illinois where she recently completed her Master's in Wildlife Biology. Her combination of expertise in technology and biology will be a

great asset. Joy Lewis joined the staff in January as an Executive Office Assistant. Joy has a background in environmental science and writing, and experience as an editor. She's handling many office management duties, and editing our reports for publication.

Presentations now being planned include grant writing and book repair, two topics that many Montana librarians requested in the recent training survey. MSL will be working with two MLA groups — the School/Library Media Division and the Technical Services Interest Group — to plan and coordinate training sessions for the Fall workshop.

Registration forms will be available online and in the next issue of *Big Sky Libraries*. Contact: Sue Jackson, 800-338-5087 or sujackson@state.mt.us.

Together with the skills and experience of our longer-tenured staff, this creates a tremendous pool of talent and energy within the Heritage Program - and NRIS as a whole - to tackle the many exciting challenges and opportunities ahead.

MSL Commission News



Bruce Morton, Dean of Libraries at Montana State University and new MSL Commissioner.

Bruce Morton, Dean of Libraries at Montana State University, has been selected by Dr. Richard Crofts, Commissioner of Higher Education, to serve a three-year term on the Montana State Library Commission. Mr. Morton replaces Michael Schulz of the Western Montana College Library.

Mr. Morton has been with the MSU Libraries for 16 years and has been Dean of Libraries since 1993. "I am delighted to have been appointed to the Commission. It is a great opportunity for personal and professional

growth, as well as an opportunity to carry MSU's land grant service mission to another sphere. Working with the fine folks who comprise Montana's library community is something to which I very much look forward," said Mr. Morton.

Other State Library Commissioners are Rosemary Garvey, Butte; David Johnson, Billings; Dorothy Laird, Whitefish; and Al Randall, Troy; who are appointed by the governor; as well as Linda McCulloch, Superintendent of Public Instruction [OPI]; and Cheri Bergeron, alternate for the Superintendent of OPI.

NOTE: The Commission will meet on Tuesday, June 12 in Helena in the MSL Conference room. The Commission will travel to Libby for their Thursday, August 9 meeting at the Lincoln County Library. All are welcome to attend the meetings.

Montana Library Directory Now Online

Authorized library staff can now update information in the Montana Library Directory online. This new development, facilitated by Mike Price and Diane Gunderson, will allow the directory to be up-to-date and more useful. To access the directory, users must employ Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 (or newer) or Netscape Navigator 6.0.

In the coming months, users will be able to search for library information with keyword and Boolean operators. For example, a user might search for all employees named "Smith," who are employees in school libraries in the Sagebrush or the South Central library federation.

MSL will continue to print and distribute paper copies of the directory. For more information, contact Diane Gunderson, 444-5349, dgunderson@state.mt.us.

Talking Book Library Is Online With WebOPAC

Patrons of the Talking Book Library (TBL) with Internet access now have an option of searching and ordering books online. A patron can perform his or her own searches and order directly using the TBL's WebOPAC (Online Patron Access Computer). Tristen Shinnick and Moriah Haley, in cooperation with the database company, Keystone Systems, designed the WebOPAC site. To view the web site, go to <http://www.klasweb.ms.state.mt.us>.

WebOPAC allows patrons more independence and convenience in selecting reading materials. Previously, patrons could only search for materials in a printed catalog or by contacting a TBL staff member, who then performed the search. With the aid of other adaptive software, the web site offers more privacy and searches tailored to the patron's visual acuity level and desired search methods. Materials ordered through WebOPAC are mailed the next business day. Twenty-five patrons have registered to use this new services and MSL expects that number to steadily increase.

Collection Management Honor Roll 2000

Libraries on the 2000 Collection Management Honor Roll were announced at the MLA awards luncheon in Kalispell in April. This year, 47 libraries met all the criteria and received recognition and certificates from the State Library Commission. Congratulations to the following libraries for their commitment to building a shared database in Montana:

Academic Libraries

Billings, Rocky Mountain College Library
 Glendive, Dawson Community College Library
 Great Falls, MSU College of Technology - Great Falls Library
 Great Falls, University of Great Falls Library
 Havre, Montana State University - Northern Library
 Helena, Helena College of Technology of the UM Library
 Kalispell, Flathead Valley Community College Library
 Pablo, Salish-Kootenai College Library
 Poplar, Fort Peck Community College Tribal Library

Public Libraries

Baker, Fallon County Library
 Billings, Parmly Billings Library
 Bozeman, Bozeman Public Library
 Butte, Butte-Silver Bow Public Library
 Cascade, Wedsworth Memorial Library
 Chinook, Blaine County Library
 Cut Bank, Glacier County Library
 Deer Lodge, Wm. K. Kohrs Memorial Library
 Dillon, Dillon City Library
 Ennis, Madison Valley Public Library
 Fairfield, Fairfield-Teton Public Library
 Glasgow, Glasgow City County Library
 Glendive, Glendive Public Library
 Hamilton, Bitterroot Public Library

Hardin, Big Horn County Library
 Harlem, Harlem Public Library
 Havre, Havre-Hill County Library
 Helena, Lewis & Clark Public Library
 Hot Springs, Preston Hot Springs Town County Library
 Kalispell, Flathead County Library
 Lewistown, Lewistown Public Library
 Libby, Lincoln County Public Library
 Miles City, Miles City Public Library
 Missoula, Missoula Public Library
 Plains, Plains District Library
 Plentywood, Sheridan County Library
 Scobey, Daniels County Library
 Sidney, Sidney Public Library
 Valier, Valier Public Library
 West Yellowstone, West Yellowstone Public Library
 Wibaux, Wibaux Public Library

School Libraries

Eureka, Eureka Elementary K-8 School Library
 Glendive, Dawson County High School Library
 Kalispell, Flathead High School Library
 Libby, Libby High School Library
 Livingston, Park High School Library
 Sidney, Sidney High School Library

Special Libraries

Billings, TRIC/PLUK Library

MLN Gateway Continues to Grow

The MLN Gateway has grown to include several additional libraries. Currently linked library catalogs include the holdings of several dozen Montana libraries, as well as the Gale/InfoTrac periodical databases, and OCLC's WorldCat union catalog.

New libraries include the Havre-Hill Library, the Flathead County Library System, the University of Montana's catalog (which includes

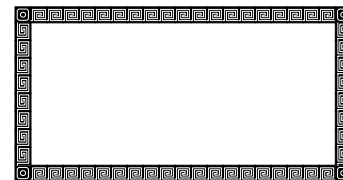
a number of libraries' collections), and the Montana State Library's catalog.

The Gateway can be found at: <http://montanalibraries.org/>; select "Library Catalogs, Databases & Indexes". Please share this information with your patrons.

Contact: Bruce Newell (406)444-9816 or bnewell@state.mt.us.



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Karen Strege, State Librarian

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Barbara Sawitzke,
Administrative Assistant

Spotlight: Barbara Sawitzke, Administrative Assistant

Barbara Sawitzke joined MSL as the new administrative assistant in April.

In 1999 Barbara returned to Helena, her childhood home, after twenty years. She attended colleges in Billings and Salt Lake City before earning her BS degree in journalism with a minor in English from the University of Oregon. Barbara then moved on to become an associate editor for a small publishing company in Frederick, MD, which published directories on corporate, foundation, and religious philanthropy. Barbara says, "It was every bit as exciting as it sounds."

Barbara has two gorgeous sons, Kyle, 8, and Sean, who will be 4 in June, who keep her very busy. She loves to spend time with family, do jigsaw puzzles, and laugh. "I've been told many times I have a very dry sense of humor, but nobody has ever said whether that is good or bad," she quipped and then went on to say, "I'm very happy to have joined the staff at the State Library."

Barbara works in the administration section of MSL. She works on personnel, safety, workers compensation issues, takes minutes for the MSL Commission, orders supplies and generally acts as the state librarian's assistant.